

Claire Hammer, RDN, CDE
Registered Dietitian Nutritionist
Certified Diabetes Educator
Marshall, Michigan

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I oppose HB 4688.

Michigan consumers often seek the advice of those with nutrition backgrounds and are provided with legitimate and helpful general information. However, the line is drawn when nutrition advice becomes Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT), the therapeutic approach to treating chronic or acute medical conditions and their symptoms through a specific diet or other nutritional intervention. Once a medical condition is evident, the danger posed by an unqualified provision of Medical Nutrition Therapy cannot be understated. RDN's have a thorough understanding of biology, chemistry, biochemistry, molecular biology and microbiology as it relates to the disease state and its nutritional treatment. Licensure ensures these individuals meet a rigorous set of standards and are qualified to give such advice.

A case in point: A few years ago I worked with a patient who was admitted to the Critical Care Unit with a blood sugar over 1,000 (10 times greater than normal). She had been advised by a "friend" selling supplements to stop her insulin as treatment for her diabetes and take cinnamon supplements instead. She did survive but after a very traumatic experience not to mention the health care costs and probable long term issues she will have.

Licensure of dietitians and nutritionists in Michigan was supported in the Legislature to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public by identifying the most competent, qualified and trained practitioners in the field of dietetic and nutrition services. Through licensure the public can identify and know when the information being given by "experts" is based on science and is being given by individuals with appropriate education and experience, especially as it pertains to individuals who have medical conditions, which could be adversely affected by improper nutrition counseling.